

JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

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NEWS

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Modest but Positive Outcomes for JOBS

A JLARC performance audit of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS) found that the program has produced positive, but modest outcomes for its clients; and that it lacks performance outcome measures and adequate assessment of whether program goals are being met.

The study focused on the effectiveness and costs of JOBS, the current welfare-to-work program managed by the Department of Social and Health Services.

Modest gains were in three areas: 1) there was a slight increase in average employment earnings for clients; 2) there was a decline in the number of clients receiving welfare; and 3) there was a reduction in the average monthly AFDC grant to clients.

However, the JOBS program lacks performance outcome measures related to its statutory goals, and there has been no assessment until now of whether these goals are being met.

Current JOBS expenditures are not commensurate with three services shown by the study sample to have the greatest effect

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CLARIFICATION SOUGHT ON FOREST BOARD TRANSFER LANDS PRIORITIES

JLARC's mandated study of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) management of the forest board transfer lands found that state statute does not identify relative priorities for DNR in managing the 531,000 acres of lands the state received in trust from the counties in the 1920s and 1930s nor does it clearly identify the trust's primary beneficiaries.

Identification of these priorities and beneficiaries would help determine whether DNR has a duty to maximize the revenue generated from the forest board lands.

The report includes recommendations to clarify the priorities and beneficiaries of the trust, increase the amount of revenue generated on behalf of trust beneficiaries, and make better information available to the legislature and trust beneficiaries. The report was adopted by JLARC on December 16, 1996, and the committee added its own addendum.

The committee approved the recommendation that the legislature consider establishing relative priorities for DNR management of the lands and identifying the primary beneficiaries of the trust, deferring identification of the priorities themselves to the legislature.

The report also considers the return of the lands back to the counties, and identifies several issues the legislature would need to address should this decision be made. These include the distribution of revenue from reconveyed lands, limitations on land use, maintaining public access, and the financial impact on other trust beneficiaries. The committee approved the recommendation that these issues be considered, but concluded that the policy issue on whether to reconvey the lands would be best addressed by the legislature as a whole.

Several recommendations relating to the management of the trust lands are also presented in the report,

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Study Recommends Against Transfer of OMS

JLARC's recent study of the Office of Marine Safety (OMS) found no organizational problems that justify its termination and merger with the Department of Ecology (DOE), and recommends that only one function be transferred to DOE.

After June 1997, OMS is scheduled to terminate and its program and functions are to be operated by DOE.

The report recommends only OMS' vessel contingency planning function be transferred to DOE.

The report also recommends that the legislature clarify OMS's relationship to the federal United States Coast Guard inspection programs.

JLARC approved the report for distribution, but took no action on the recommendations.

Created in 1991, OMS is charged with preventing oil spills from tank, cargo, and passenger vessels transiting state waters. The independent agency has a budget of \$4 million (1995-97).

Forest (continued)

including a recommendation that DNR adopt a policy to maximize the present value of its timber investments. Although DNR earns more revenue per acre from its state forest lands than any other state forestry agency, its return on investment generated on state forest lands lags behind the performance of an index of western timberland properties. The committee deferred action on this recommendation because policy regarding the lands' management priorities must first be clarified.

No Change Needed to Vocational Education Funding Formula

JLARC's study on K-12 Vocational Education funding concludes that new methods of instruction do not warrant a change in the vocational education funding formula.

The report recommends the legislature provide authority for OSPI's policy of limiting vocational education funding to classes with 26 or fewer students. The committee added an addendum that expressed its support for retaining a legislatively-imposed 10 percent lid on indirect costs in vocational education through the 1997-99 Biennium, and asked OSPI to further study the definitions of indirect and direct costs.

This study was mandated due to legislative concern that newer methods of

vocational education may be less costly than traditional methods, as evidenced by a growing gap between formula funding and expenditures. Funding for vocational education provides for smaller class sizes than basic education, and is thus funded at a more "enriched" level.

Since the legislature reduced the enrichment in 1995, the gap between vocational education funding and expenditures has decreased.

JOBS (continued)

on reducing welfare dependency: *job search, on-the-job training, and post-secondary education.* A large

portion of expenditures go to assessment and reassessment of clients.

The audit also found that clients are not adequately monitored or sanctioned when appropriate, and that contracts for services to JOBS clients are not competitively awarded, do not have a rate structure or uniform outcome measures, and are not adequately monitored.

The report recommends adopting at least two outcome measures for the program, conducting an annual analysis of program effectiveness, and evaluating the cost of services relative to their effectiveness. Other recommendations include improving client monitoring, simplifying the assessment and sanctioning procedures, and improving the contracting process and the data-tracking system. All of the report recommendations were adopted by the committee. They will apply to the program that will replace JOBS as a result of federal welfare reform.

JOBS clients are served by the Department of Social and Health Services, the Employment Security Department, and by third-party contractors.

Final reports on January agenda

- **Child Protective Services (CPS)**
- **Juvenile Rehabilitation
Capacity Planning**
- **K-12 Supplemental Contracts**

The meeting will be held in Olympia, John A. Cherberg Building, Hearing Room 1, on January 10, 1997.